



MEMORANDUM

To: Department Directors
From: Chief Equity Officer, Brion Oaks
Date: October 22, 2019
Subject: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Trainings

The purpose of this memo is to offer guidance and support to departments interested in securing trainings in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Several departments have expressed an interest in having input from the Equity Office as they plan for these trainings. The following is some guidance we thought would be useful to your department in promoting and advancing training opportunities for your staff.

We suggest starting with the City of Austin Equity Statement that was co-created with over 200 community members who logged over 900 volunteer hours in its creation. In the Austin Strategic Direction 2023, the City has identified equity as a core anchor across all of our strategic outcomes. The City of Austin Equity Statement is as follows:

Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community. The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore we begin the journey toward social equity with this definition. The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of the wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

When identifying a training best suited for your department's needs and goals, it is advised that your trainer have a racial equity lens and a systems analysis that identifies how power - and the lack thereof - impacts people of color and those most directly impacted by policy and City decisions. Prioritizing trainings that address the institutional and structural dimensions of racism – rather than simply individual and intergroup dynamics of oppression - is key in our alignment with our Strategic Direction 2023. There is a growing field of practice that can be used to proactively work to advance racial equity, both inside and outside our organizations.

The following has been adapted from The Aspen Institute guide for selecting racial equity training and programs. Several key components to consider when selecting a program, workshop, or training include:

- A theory of practice grounded in a conceptual analysis of racial and ethnic oppression and social change
- A commitment to organizations that are accountable to the communities they serve and that work with groups and leaders from all levels of the community
- Includes clearly defined interventions and acknowledgement of intended and unintended outcomes
- Inclusive and interactive training design and format
- Well-known and well-reviewed by professionals and participants knowledgeable about race-related programs

Some questions to consider in the selection of a training program:

Training Philosophy and Goals

1. What is the program's underlying philosophy regarding the significance of race?

2. On what problems or issues does the training focus?
3. How does the training help change individuals, intergroup relations, and/or community structures?
4. What are the goals of the training?

Program Capacity

1. What is the program's history and roots?
2. How large is the program? (How many offices? How many trainers/staff?)
3. What types of training and other services does it offer?
4. Does the program have a specialized focus or expertise in particular issues, geographic areas or racial/ethnic/cultural groups?
5. Can the program offer multilingual training?

Participants

1. Who are the program's typical participants?
2. What is the usual group size?
3. Can they provide a client list?

Trainers

1. Who are the trainers?
2. What are their backgrounds and training experience?
3. How does the program train or prepare its trainers?

Methods and Materials

1. What training tools does the program use? (e.g., presentation, discussion, interactive exercises, role-plays, and videos)
2. What is the general structure of the training?
3. What materials does the training provide to participants? What other materials are available?

Assessment

1. How does the program assess the needs of their participants?
2. How will they tailor the program to meet participants' needs?
3. How does the program evaluate its own training methods and effectiveness?
4. What has the program learned from past evaluations?

Outcomes

1. What new skills, information, understandings, etc., will participants take away with them from the training?
2. How will participants transfer what they learned in the training to their organizations or communities?

The Equity Office is committed to offering support in your efforts to bring equity, inclusion, and diversity training to your department. Please contact Kellee Coleman, Business Process Consultant for the Equity Office, with questions at 512-974-7979 or Kellee.Coleman@austintexas.gov. She is available to consult you on your training needs, as well as vet potential trainings you may be planning for staff. For additional resources on the role that government plays in advancing racial equity, please see the Government Alliance on Race & Equity website at <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Deputy City Manager and Assistant City Managers